

Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.gov

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SIX OPERATION RELEAF EVENTS PLANNED IN IOWA FOR FALL 2008

Alliant Energy customers can purchase trees for \$25

DES MOINES – Iowans looking for a cost-effective, yet eye-pleasing way to reduce home heating and cooling costs are encouraged to participate in Operation ReLeaf. Operation ReLeaf is a residential tree planting program that promotes long-term energy and natural resource conservation.

Operation ReLeaf is a partnership initiative funded by Alliant Energy and administered by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources with assistance from local partners, which include county conservation boards and county extension offices.

Through the program, around 2,500 high quality landscaping trees will be offered to Alliant Energy residential customers for just \$25 each this fall. The trees typically retail for \$65 or more and will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Alliant Energy will sponsor eight Operation ReLeaf events this fall in the following communities: Muscatine on Sept. 20, Clarinda on Sept. 25, Fairfield on Sept. 27, Marion on Oct. 4, Marshalltown on Oct. 11, and Creston on Oct. 25. Tree species offered will vary at each event and include shade trees, ornamentals and conifers.

Operation ReLeaf participants must be Alliant Energy residential customers. Advanced order is recommended and advance purchase is limited to two trees per household. In the event there are extra trees available on distribution day, those trees will

be released for purchase at that time. Order forms are available online (www.alliantenergy.com/releaf).

“All trees are purchased through a bidding process to promote local nurseries,” says Paul Tauke, Iowa DNR Forestry Bureau Chief and State Forester. “This is a great way for homeowners to get a quality tree at an affordable price.”

For more information, contact Emma Bruemmer with the Iowa DNR at 515-281-6749.

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THOUSANDS EXPECTED AT ANNUAL FT. ATKINSON RENDEZVOUS

Fort Atkinson -- Thousands of visitors will make the pilgrimage to northeast Iowa this fall for the 32nd Annual Fort Atkinson Rendezvous.

The annual celebration recreates life as it was on the Iowa frontier in the 1840s with authentic buckskinners, U.S. Army dragoons, black powder shoots, crafts, contents, demonstrations and period music. The two-day celebration is packed with demonstrations on basket weaving, rug hooking, pottery, blacksmithing and period hunting and trapping and more. Numerous contests are planned, including skillet throw, cooking, flint and steel, shooting, turkey calling and knife throwing competitions. Youngsters will also have an opportunity to see and play games popular with kids of that era.

The two-day event will be held Sept. 27 and 28. Hours for the event are 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. The theme of this year's rendezvous is “Frontier Medicine.”

There is no admission charge, and parking is free. Fort Atkinson State Preserve is located on the north side of the town of Fort Atkinson in Winneshiek County, just west of Iowa Highway 24. It is approximately 175 miles northeast of Des Moines, or 90 miles north of Cedar Rapids.

For more information, contact Scot Michelson, Volga River Recreation Area park ranger, at 563-425-4161.

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MEMBERS SOUGHT FOR BRUSHY CREEK TRAIL ADVISORY BOARD

DES MOINES -- Hikers, bikers and horseback riders interested in protecting, preserving and enhancing the trail system at Brushy Creek Recreation Area are being encouraged to serve on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Brushy Creek Trail Advisory Board.

The 10-member Trail Advisory Board is responsible for advising the DNR on issues and recommendations regarding the development and maintenance of 45 miles of

trails at Brushy Creek, a popular equestrian and multi-use recreation area located near Lehigh in Webster County. The board meets twice per year, in the spring and fall.

The DNR is looking for qualified applicants who actively participate in recreational trail activities, from hiking, bicycling and horseback riding to snowmobiling and cross country skiing. There are currently seven board positions open, each serving a three-year term.

For more information about the board or becoming a member of the board, go to www.iowadnr.gov/bcreek/index.html. The form for serving on the board can be found in the middle of the page.

Deadline for applications for the upcoming three-year term will be 4:30 p.m., Friday Oct. 3.

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“GIVE BACK” OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND FOR VOLUNTEERS

DES MOINES — Although school is back in session and summer has come to a close, the Keepers of the Land Volunteer Program of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources offers volunteers ample opportunities to continue to give back to our natural resources.

- Creek Cleanup and Tree Planting Event: Volunteers are needed at a collaborative event involving the DNR, Polk County Conservation Board and Central Iowa Paddlers at Mally's Weh-Weh-Neh-Kee Park in Des Moines Sept. 20. For more information contact Hank Vogel or Pat Spain at 515-323-5280.

- Shooting Sports Opportunity: Officials at the Princeton Gun Range, located in Scott County, are seeking volunteers to assist with the construction of target stands and signs, repair shooting tables and remove empty shell casings and cartridges. This opportunity is available immediately on Fridays from 2-4 p.m. and is ongoing. For more information contact Jeff Harrison at 563-349-9418.

- Frank Lloyd Wright House Visitor Center Opportunities: Members of the Friends of Cedar Rock State Park near Quasqueton are seeking volunteers to assist with greeting visitors and gift shop clerking at the Visitor's Center, and providing tours of the Frank Lloyd Wright House. These opportunities start immediately and are available through Oct. 31. For more information contact Pat Schmitz at 319-934-3572.

- Trail Maintenance Opportunity: Officials at Wilson Island State Park are seeking volunteers to assist with various trail maintenance activities, including clearing brush and removing invasive species. This opportunity starts immediately and is ongoing. For more information contact Chris Anunson at 712-642-2069.

- Prairie Management Opportunity: Officials at the Prairie Seed Production Plot near Adel are seeking volunteers to assist with various prairie seed production needs, including removing invasive species, harvesting seeds and planting prairie plugs. This opportunity is available immediately and is ongoing. For more information contact Bill Johnson at 515-543-8319.

- Prairie and Forest Burn Opportunity: Officials at Mines of Spain State Recreation Area are seeking volunteers to help with the burning tall grass prairies, savannas and forested areas within the park. Volunteers must be 18 years or older. This opportunity starts Sept. 30 and ends Nov. 1. For more information contact Wayne Buchholtz at 563-556-0620.

For information on these and more volunteer opportunities visit www.keepersoftheland.org. For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or Merry.Rankin@dnr.iowa.gov.

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VOLUNTEER CAMPGROUND HOSTS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR SERVICE

BRIGHTON – The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) said “thank you” to a group of important volunteers at a celebration event last week. The sixth annual Campground Host Appreciation Event took place at Lake Darling State Park Sept. 9.

Roughly one-third of Iowa’s 110 campground hosts attended the celebration that honored them for the invaluable services they provide to Iowa’s state parks. DNR park staff, along with Natural Resource Commissioner Janelle Rettig, were also in attendance to recognize these outstanding volunteers.

“I used to think I had missed the great moments in U.S. history of volunteerism,” noted Jeff Hildebrand, Lake Darling Park Ranger, “but then I work with folks like you I know that I haven’t missed a thing. You are the answer to our state parks’ prayers.”

Campground hosts offer assistance as greeters, informational aides and maintenance support at state parks. Hosts live and work on campgrounds during the busy summer camping seasons, most of them volunteering hundreds of hours each summer.

“For me it’s all about loving Iowa’s state parks and wanting to take care of them,” said Mike Orgazan, who hosts at Lacey-Keosauqua with his wife Regina. “It’s really rewarding to help visitors have an enjoyable experience and gain a new appreciation for their parks.”

The appreciation celebration kicked off Sept. 8, with free camping, a potluck dinner at the park’s new four-season lodge and live music provided by Ed Bruegge and Friends of Fairfield. The following day DNR officials treated hosts to a catered lunch, certificates of appreciation and a presentation on Iowa’s Peregrine Falcons by Kay

Neumann of Saving our Avian Resources (SOAR). Volunteers also were given the opportunity to assist in the release of a rehabilitated great horned owl.

Last year, volunteers across Iowa donated more than 230,000 hours of service to the DNR. Parks volunteers — including campground hosts — account for about 40-percent of that.

For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or at Merry.Rankin@dnr.iowa.gov.

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